

What's wrong with Risborough Town?

MIKE WHITESMAN reports

THEY'RE playing a waiting game as Risborough.

But then, basement-bound after fruitless experiments with 99.9 per cent of everything at their disposal, they are left with no other choice.

Many feel that time and persistence will fester their own remedy, and so faithfully keep plugging away to earn a chance of fortune.

Time, however, is fast turning into a double-agent. The club are over half-way through their fixture programme, while, with every pointless Saturday that passes, their ally gradually

transforms into an enemy.

Player-manager, Jim Truett, fully realises the extent of his present dilemma. During his reign, Town have known promotion glory, just as they have the pangs of last season's relegation.

Yet now, a formerly alien experience looms ahead — an ominous need to seek re-election.

Unaccustomed as they are to dealing with such a worrying

prospect, the facts remain, emphasised by a quick study of the Hellenic League's Division one table.

Suffice to say that the once-forceful Princes, Risborough Town, must reap full points from their three games in hand over fellow-wallowers, Aylesbury Town, Corinthians and Hungerford, to keep the flag of hopes hoisted.

And it was but a fortnight ago that the Corinthians

claimed the third victory of their season at Windsor Playing Fields.

Morale among the Risborough playing staff seems to be admirably high. There have of course been recent resignations of George Geddes and Mick Rockell, but thankfully, despondency is being stifled to a major degree.

Naturally everyone has his own thoughts and suggestions, an afternoon's investigation at Windsor Playing Fields on Saturday was soon to reveal.

In a steam-lined dressing room after yet another defeat I spoke to several first team members, including Truett himself.

A fortnight earlier, whilst driving home from a similarly unrewarding excursion to Wangan, Jim had told me that he didn't mind what he tried now, everything else had failed.

This week he confirmed that he is fully aware of Town's failings, by reeling off a list long enough to fill a column.

"There's a big hole in the middle of the pitch and we lack a couple of good wing-half backs; we give away too many loose balls when in possession due to inaccuracy; etc., etc., etc."

But recognising and solving the problems are two very different tasks. And, with a succession of injuries plaguing the club, Truett must surely hope for a minor miracle.

His continuing step will be to try out a young, inexperienced reserve team reservoir, particularly where the attack is concerned.

Despite growing pressure from friends and colleagues, it is unlikely that he will venture into the front line himself. Jim was to tell me that the time spent in attack late in Saturday's match had been enough.

Responsibility for the mid-field 'hole' must, to a large degree, fall on the lanky Paul McStay. But "I feel torn between attack and defence" he explained.

Paul, formerly with Marlow, had until recently done staunch work in the number six shirt. Certainly his influence was badly missed during a prolonged injury that put him on the touchline for a number of weeks last year.

An experiment using him as a link-man with number ten on, his back is mis-firing however, and will continue to do so until Paul is allowed to commit himself unashamedly to one side.

"In the last ten minutes I fell back into defence and felt much better," he admitted soon after Saturday's final whistle had blown.

Nevertheless Paul typifies native opinion when he says: "A good win, or even any win,



PAUL McSTAY: "any win would boost morale"

EXTRA TIME

Now it must be Slough Town!

IT was a semi-final day for ex-Wycombe Wanderers player Peter Roystone on Saturday when he captained his Wokingham team to a splendid 1-0 victory over his former colleagues in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup clash.

With Wycombe now out of the competition the way is really left wide open for Slough Town, who narrowly missed last season.

Other results in the quarter-final matches saw Wolverton and B.R. pull off an away success over Didcot Town, while Maidenhead United disposed of Aylesbury 2-0.

Another three

• AMERSHAM manager, Jimmy Strain, who may yet decide to quit soccer because of an ankle injury, hammered a hat-trick in the revenge match with Waddesdon on Saturday.

And although he says he is only playing to keep up a reasonably experienced first team squad, he has hit five of the Magpies' twelve goals in successive games.

A 3-1 win must have been a major tonic for Amersham. Earlier in the season the Premier Division's basement club had collected a surprise win at Spratley's Meadow 2-0.

Reserves off

• GROUND conditions put paid to Chalfont St. Peter Reserves' League fixture at Leighton Town on Saturday.

But then, reports of the Bedfordshire club's pitch from last season suggest that no one need be surprised by the referee's decision.

Dean off again

• HE'S off again. Yes, Robin Dean, Princes Risborough's much-travelled and much-missed defender, leaves England again this week, hardly any time at all after his recent return.

Business commitments draw him away, this time back to Israel. Trips recorded to date include those to Moscow, Greece, Rotterdam, Ireland and an earlier one to Israel.

His departure heaps another problem on Town's manager Jim Truett, who, as can be seen from the article on this page, is struggling to put his team back along the victory trail.

Dean expects to be back, however, within two or three weeks. It certainly can't be soon enough for the club.

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Wycombe pay high price for their lack of application

By PATRICK VERCOE

Wokingham T. 1, Wycombe W. 0

which visibly worried the home defence. Baker and Worley worked an opening for Samuels but Bifield showed quick anticipation by charging out of his goal to smother the chance.

At the other end centre-forward Kelman streaked through the Wanderers' defence, hotly pursued by Lailey, but Maskell had moved off his line to narrow the angle intelligently and was able to parry Kelman's first shot before the ex-Slough Town player lofted the rebound wide.

Just a minute from the interval Wokingham recovered a goal which had been disallowed for offside. This was certainly a lucky break for Wanderers and a decision which greatly angered the crowd. From a Lowe free-kick the ball was only partially cleared to Goodenough, who shot through a ruck of players and past Maskell's right hand. The linesman amazingly raised his flag to signal offside although a Wycombe defender was standing on his own goal-line.

Gilt equaliser

Wokingham keeper Bifield, who often gave the impression of not being too sure with his handling, nearly gave Wycombe a gilt equaliser when he bumbled the ball outside the area and was forced to concede a free-kick as Faulkner had harassed him.

As a thunderstorm broke over Wokingham's neat and compact ground sending the spectators rushing for shelter, Wycombe nearly put themselves on equal status. Samuels' vicious curling cross brought a spectacular diving header from Merrick, which was just off target.

In the 63rd minute justice was seen to be done bearing in mind Wokingham's cancelled goal. It was, however, a tragedy for Wanderers that such a simple result should produce the deciding margin.

Baker hit a high and hopeful pass deep into the Wycombe penalty far too strong for Ron Harper to reach. But Randle was unable to get up with his usual sense of purpose and the ball screwed off the side of his head. Harper, who had never

instructed to sit on the head and consolidate. Centre-forward Kelman came out of the forward line to help block the middle allowing less room for Baker to manipulate openings.

The game now became a battle of touchline tactics. In the 72nd minute Wycombe made a tactical change by pulling off Faulkner, which to my was a slightly harsh decision as he was playing no worse than any other of his colleagues, allowing Ruddy to display his skills.

So Horseman's seven-year reign at Loakes Park continues. Obviously he would have been missed by the

TONY'S 7 DAY BAN

club, despite the general feeling of the fans, for no team, including England, can function successfully without goals.

There is, however, one interesting aspect to materialise from the whole affair. New coach Brian Lee will obviously stand no nonsense from his players as is indicated by Horseman's one-week ban.

Patrick Vercoe

MARLOW FALTER AT HOME AND KISS HOPES GOODBYE

Marlow 0, Boreham Wood 1

IN A VERY DULL, drab game at Marlow on Saturday, the home team, which did not contain one single forward worthy of the name, lost both points, and in doing so virtually kissed goodbye to the promotion hopes with which Marlow so hopefully began the season.

One goal, a simple header in the 22nd minute, was enough to give the Boreham Wood side a result the poorest of the season —

Before the start of this Athlone League, Division 2 game, there was just the slimmest of outside chances that Marlow might even at this late stage, struggle to second place in the table by the end of the season and attain higher status. But

Brian hit a high and hopeful pass deep into the Wycombe penalty far too strong for Ron Harper to reach. But Randle was unable to get up with his usual sense of purpose and the ball screwed off the side of his head. Harper, who had never

with this defeat that can now be quite definitely written off.

With such an obvious lack of form and striking power it is unlikely if this Marlow side can reasonably expect to go anywhere. The prospect of facing mighty Slough Town tomorrow does nothing to breed optimism and all that one can look for is a desperate rearguard action.

Against Boreham Wood it was Marlow defence which emerged as the heroes. They put up a magnificent show to a man, with Dave Wigley in goal, Peter Stone at centre-half and Peter Eyes outstanding. They Austin and Matthew Watt fended and carried the whole game long, but to no avail

forwards. They were disjointed and lacked cohesion as well as the necessary vital timing to split open a packed Boreham Wood defence.

The Marlow side had a fluency about it all the way through which Marlow could not match and in this factor alone lay the major difference between the sides. It was nothing to see ten men back in defence of the "Wood" goal, yet with one long clearance, to see seven of them bounding the life out of the home defenders.

Having seen the attempts of the Marlow forward line for the past three successive matches, it is patently obvious that at this one particular point has to be bound. Failure to do so is only going to result in a total breakdown of the defensive curtain which has the best record in the league.

As individuals, Bobby Marchant and Ray Palmer continued to give 100 per cent effort, but could not be expected to shoulder the burden alone. Mick Page was well below his usual standard and Bernie Saunders could get little to go right for him, while Dave Edwards, until he was injured, contributed little apart from a couple of excellent cross-field passes that split the Boreham Wood defence, but derived no other benefit.

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